

FROM

STATE SENATOR

**SAM AANESTAD**

4<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

Northern California



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## Optometry Update



### SB 579 Removes Restrictions for Free Optometric Services

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger took the step of improving health care for all California children by signing SB 579 from Senator Sam Aanestad (R-Grass Valley) into law. The measure will remove restrictions on open advertisement of free optometric services – as long as the “free service” is not linked to other considerations – such as the purchase of eyeglasses.

#### The Problem

Current law flatly prohibits any sort of advertisement for free optometric services. The ban even covers the simple task of issuing flyers that announce eye screenings at schools, health fairs or charitable events where optometric services are volunteered. The **California Optometric Association**, which sponsored the Aanestad legislation, reports that early testing is crucial when it comes to identifying and dealing with vision problems.

#### Problems Widespread

According the **National Institutes of Health**, about one in 15 Americans has eyesight so poor they could not pass a driver's license vision test, but many go without correcting the problem.

#### SB 579 Solution

**SB 579** will allow for the advertisement of all optometric services that are offered free of charge. The bill will prevent advertisement of free services – if the service is specifically linked to any sort of purchase such as eyeglasses, contact lenses or any other product.

#### Better Care

The Aanestad legislation further gives the **State Board of Optometry** the authority to license optometrists already in active practice and licensed in other states prior to January 1, 2000, so long as they are in good standing and meet

*“This is common sense legislation that allows for the advertisement of free school vision screenings and mobile eye screening units that are often sponsored by non-profit, service organizations like the Lions Club.”*

**Senator Sam Aanestad**

all California's established requirements.

For more information, visit: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/4>